

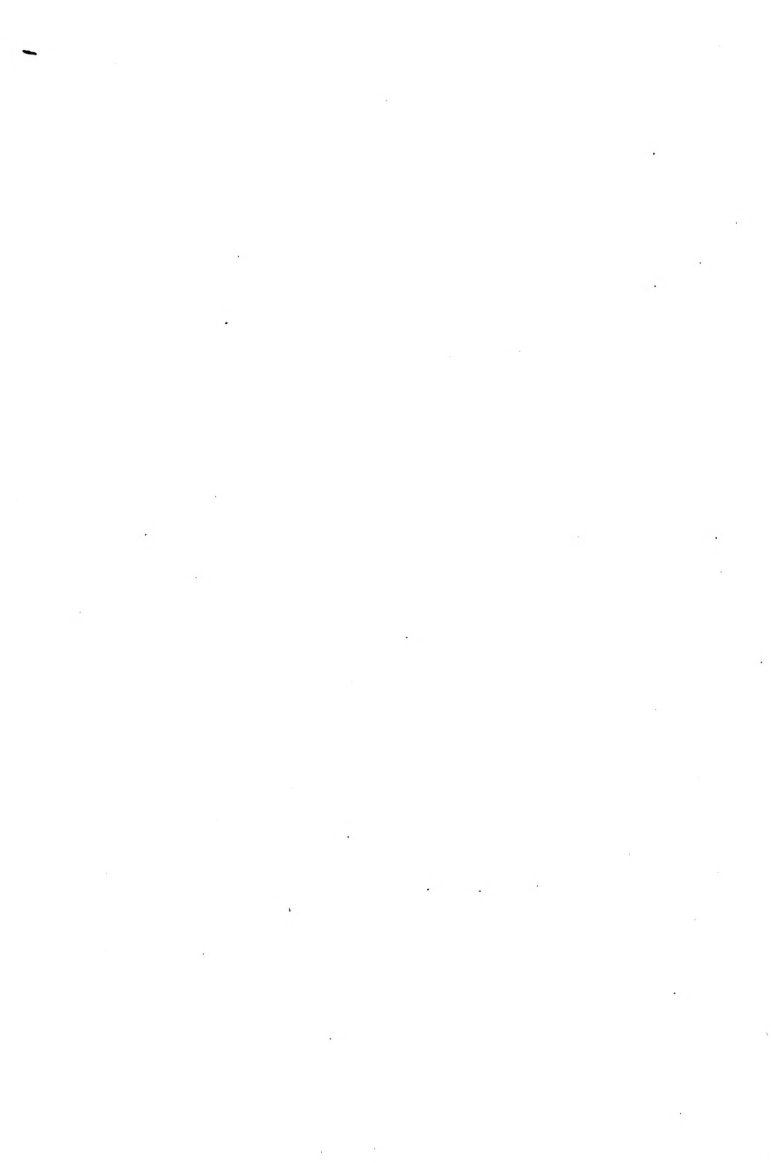
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A. S. Christian Commission.

AMONG THE WOUNDED.



Experiences of a Delegate.



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Experiences of a Delegate.

THE

PHILADELPHIA:

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1864.

NOTE.

Rev. DAVID WESTON, writer of the following Report, is Pastor of the Pleasant Street Church, (Baptist) Worcester, Mass.

We publish it for circulation among the friends at home, because it gives so fair and full a picture of the Delegate Work of the U. S. Christian Commission. There are between two and three hundred Delegates now in the field doing similar service, according to the nature of the work required. Can words express or figures estimate the value and influence of such service? Will not heaven be the happier and earth more blessed for this Christian devotion? Is not this a period of harvest for the Church? The Christian Commission has become a necessity to our soldiers, and is perhaps doing even more for the Christian friends who sustain it by their prayers and means.

Wm
D. T. Merkley.

15 Ap 1907

AMONG THE WOUNDED.

EXPERIENCE OF A DELEGATE.

Worcester, Mass., July 28th, 1864.

REV. LEMUEL MOSS,

DEAR BROTHER,

At your request I send you a detailed report of my labors and experiences as Delegate of the United States Christian Commission.

On the 16th of May, 1864, I started from Washington, in company with several other delegates of the Christian Commission, to labor in the hospitals at Fredericksburg. We went down the Potomac as far as Belle Plain, by steamboat, and thence, with our blankets strapped upon our backs, and our haversacks and canteens hung from our shoulders, set out for Fredericksburg, twelve or fifteen miles distant, on foot.

Shortly after leaving Belle Plain, we met a train of ambulances. As the drivers stopped at the top of the hill to give their horses a minute's rest, we went up to the wagons filled with wounded men, wearied and ex-

hausted with four hours' riding over a rough road and beneath a broiling sun, spoke to them a few words of cheer, and gave them coffee from our canteens. They recognized immediately the badge of the Commission, and greeted us with heartiness and joy. Several said, "I owe my life to your Commission, and so do hundreds more." "Hurry on," said one, "you're needed at Fredericksburg. There are thousands upon thousands just like us there, with none but you Christians to help them." One poor man attracted my particular notice; all his lower jaw, together with his tongue, were shot away. I gave a drink from my canteen to his companions in the ambulance, and turned away, when a murmur or groan from him recalled me, and he handed me a cup in which I poured some coffee, which he took, and, throwing back his head, turned down his throat, again murmuring or groaning to express his thanks.

It was nightfall when we arrived at Fredericksburg. We inquired for the rooms of the Christian Commission. "Come with me," said a soldier with his arm in a sling: "the Commission has done much for me, and I am glad to do any thing to repay it;" and he went with us, full three-fourths of a mile, to the very door of the house we were seeking.

The house and tents of the Commission were already filled with delegates. I was obliged to build my own sleeping room, which I did by tipping over two large boxes in the garden, one for my head and one for my feet, laying boards between them and stretching some matting over them. My house did very well, except in rain storms, when it was somewhat leaky. I lodged there for a week.

Before breakfast, on the morning after my arrival, I ran out to look through the city. It was a fearful sight. All the public buildings, churches, halls, and school-houses, and most of the private dwellings, were hospitals. The wounded lay on floors, or, a few of them, on roughly extemporized cots, so close to each other that it was difficult to pass between them, pierced and mangled in every way in which men could be and remain alive, a large proportion with limbs freshly amputated, many evidently near to death, almost all with countenances which told of suffering great and severe, but heroically borne. As I looked upon the dreadful sight, and breathed the fetid hospital air, I said, at first, "I can never work in such a place: I must return." It was only a sense of duty that determined me to try.

I was assigned to work, with other delegates, on the second floor of the "Old Factory," used as the hospital of the 5th army corps. I found there wounded men stretched side by side in six rows, extending through an apartment seventy or eighty feet in length, perhaps two hundred men in all.

In the early morning, filling our haversacks, pockets, and hands, with medicines, delicacies of food, articles of clothing, writing paper, envelopes, Testaments, and other religious books, pamphlets, papers, tracts, and whatever else we had found to be needful, we would hasten to our places of labor. First, we would do what we could for the comfort of the body,—washing and dressing the wounds, washing the faces, hands, and bodies, changing the clothing, giving medicine and food such as sick men need, changing the position, trying in every way to make the wounded heroes comfortable and cheerful. The sur-

geons and nurses welcomed us, and co-operated with us, for their work was hard, and their hospital stores nearly exhausted, and for several days they shared with us their own rations, rather than suffer us to walk in the hot sun to the Commission rooms, nearly a mile, for our dinner. After doing what we could for the comfort of the body, we would bring in our books and tracts and distribute to the wounded men, write letters for them to friends at home, talk to them of Jesus and of their own souls, read to them from the Bible, and pray with them. There was no difficulty in approaching them, learning the feelings of their hearts, and impressing them with the importance of eternal things. They were ready and ever eager to hear. The fearful scenes they had witnessed, the dangers they had met, the sufferings they had endured, had softened and subdued them, and already directed the thoughts of many to the interests of their souls. Many were near to death, and felt the need of salvation. Besides this, all felt that we had done them good. They could not but respect that religion that had prompted the benevolence to which they owed so much; they could not but listen to us as we urged its claims upon them. I heard no sneer at religion, Christians, or the church. The comforts which they all enjoyed had demonstrated to them that religion was not all emptiness. The Spirit of God was there, impressing all these thoughts upon them, and making it easy and pleasant work for us to labor for their souls. Often they would call, or send for us, to come and talk with them.

We found many noble Christians, who had held fast their integrity and grown strong amid all the temptations of war.

I shall never forget the prayer offered at one of our meetings, by one who had recently suffered amputation of the right arm. He knelt upon an empty cot and poured out his soul in supplication for the eternal welfare of his suffering and dying comrades. His frame quivered with emotion as he wrestled with God, and we all felt that God was with him. There was many a tear shed before he closed, and then, when we asked those who desired to be Christians to raise their hands, many a hand was raised showing that many a heart had been touched.

"Will you come to-morrow morning and write a letter for me to my wife?" said one. "I have found no one to write for me since I was wounded. I would ask you to write now, if it were not Sunday. I have never allowed myself to write letters on the Sabbath, and my wife would think it strange to receive a letter from me dated to-day." The next morning he said, "Write to her that my heart is filled with the love of God. Tell her of the good meetings we have, and say, that though I cannot sit or stand, I find it blessed to lie here and see the work of God go on."

"I do not grieve for my limbs," said another, who had lost both his legs: "I am content to suffer, to live maimed and helpless, or to die, in the cause of my country and of God." He lived to be removed to Washington, and shortly after died.

There were some lately enlisted as soldiers of Christ, for the Spirit of God had been working in the hospitals before I reached there, and in the army before the men were wounded.

"Thank God," said one, who lay on the floor, mortally wounded through the lungs, "that this did not come

upon me before. Until a few days ago I should have been unprepared. I went to re-enlist and came back, I hope, a Christian. O the goodness of God, to prepare me just in time. Now, I am ready either for life or for death."

I found one, a Michigan boy, whose gratitude and complete confidence I gained by once or twice substituting for his loathed hard tack, a few soft crackers and a little milk. He had just begun to trust in Christ, but was timid and doubtful. I told him of the certainty of acceptance to all who would believe—the full confidence with which the sinner might plead the promise of salvation through Christ, and his faith seemed to strengthen. The next day the grateful soldier sent for me, and said, "Under my pillow you will find a letter. It contains fifty cents worth of postage stamps; they were sent me, a little while ago, by my sister. I want you to take them, and keep them to remember me. They are all I have to give." I declined the gift, assuring him that I should never forget him. I never shall; and yet, if I had one of those postage stamps now, I should prize it higher than a gem.

Many were anxiously seeking salvation; not a few, I trust, were born again, through God's blessing on our labors. As we held religious services, many, by the lifted hand, would express their interest, and request our prayers.

"Chaplain," said one, "will you please come and talk with me?" I found him just ready, or just beginning to hope in Christ. As I told him of the way of life, he seemed to accept it with real faith. His anxiety and distress were succeeded by peace and happiness. At his

request, I wrote to his wife the tidings of his new spiritual interest and joy, and invited her to join him in a Christian life. Nearly three weeks afterwards, one day as I was working in a hospital, in Washington, a stranger entered, and, inquiring and being told my name, grasped my hand, and said, "I am the brother-in-law of J—— C——, for whom you wrote a letter, in Fredericksburg. I have come to take him home. His wife charged me not to return till I had made every possible effort to see you, and thank you for your kind labors with her husband, and the good letter you wrote to her."

"God has called loudly for me," said another, "and though I have not yet found the way of life, I hope his calls will not prove in vain. I stood fighting in six or eight inches of water. I fell just as the word was given to retreat. The rebels pursued, and charged over me. Soon they in turn retreated, passing over me again, kicking me, and ordering me into the ranks. When they had gone I crawled in the water three hundred yards, till I reached our lines, and as I crawled, O, how I prayed. I have been praying ever since, and am determined to pray till God hears my prayers."

One who was wounded dangerously, perhaps fatally, said to me, "Chaplain, I have always been a Universalist, but now I am troubled and fearful: my sins are great. I have been a bad boy: what am I to do? Must I give up all my former views?" I took his Testament and said, "Do you believe this book to be true?" "O, yes." "*All* true?" "Yes." I read the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, and then said, "Answer me your question now: must you give up Universalism, or not?" "Yes," he replied; "I see that I must." I then told him of the way of life, simply and only through faith in

Christ. "Stop, Chaplain," said he; "*read it*, read me that from the Bible." I read the third chapter of John. "Yes," said he, "that is it; I see it now," and as I talked with him I hoped he saw it in faith, to the salvation of his soul. A day or two afterwards he suffered a dangerous and painful operation. When it was over, exhausted and excited, he said, "Chaplain, I am dying now. I shall never see my mother and my home, but through Christ I shall have a better home. Sing to me; sing, "There's rest for the weary." The surgeons gave him a quieting potion, and soon he was sleeping. I never saw him again.

Such were the incidents of my labor at Fredericksburg. I remained there until the place was evacuated. I bade the wounded men good bye, as they were placed in the ambulances, and when my ward was quite emptied set out myself for Washington.

From Falmouth to Acquia Creek I was with a train of wounded men, rendering them such service as I could, as they lay, almost broiling, in open lumber cars, under a noon-day sun. At Acquia Creek I helped load a steamboat with three hundred wounded, and from there to Washington I helped take care of them. Many wounds required dressing, the bandages being displaced. Many were injured in moving, and were suffering extremest pain. They were hungry, and there was no food. A heavy thunder storm arose and beat in upon the open decks where they were lying, drenching them to the skin. It was a fearful night.

It was late when I reached Washington. The rooms of the Commission were closed, and I knew must be filled with delegates who had returned, like myself, from

Fredericksburg. I lay down on the door-step and slept till morning.

I was immediately appointed to work in Judiciary Square Hospital. I found it a different place from the "Old Factory" at Fredericksburg. Every thing possible was done for the physical comfort of its inmates. The wards were neat, well ventilated, furnished with comfortable cots, and other hospital furniture. It seemed at first sight they had no need of me; and yet I soon found enough to do. Besides the regular rations allowed the wounded, they needed delicacies and incitements to appetite, such as sick men always want; they needed articles of clothing, which Government did not give, and they had not money to buy; they needed religious reading, and snatched at it as a hungry man would snatch at food: at first I could not carry books and papers enough with me to supply during the half day the men with whom I labored. Especially they needed religious conversation and counsel. "I have been here many weeks," said one man, a Presbyterian elder, "and you are the first one whom I have heard mention religion." "How good it seems to hear once more the voice of prayer," said another. "All the while that I have been here, prayer has been offered in this ward only once." And yet the Spirit of God was evidently working in the hearts of the men; and a score, I doubt not, among the three hundred that the hospital contained, were there inquiring in their own hearts the way of life.

Two mere boys I found lying side by side, who had confided to each other their feelings, and together determined to seek religion. Together they told me their

decision, and asked for counsel. One of them soon gave me reason for strong confidence, the other for hope, that God gave them the light which they were seeking.

As I passed out one afternoon, to return to the rooms of the Commission, I saw a young man, apparently near to death. "I must speak to him now," thought I, "tomorrow he will probably be gone." I asked, "Have you a good hope in Christ?" "No," he replied, "I wish I had. Jesus seems good and lovely, and I want to love him; but I am so great a sinner, I fear that I do not."

I talked with him awhile, and when I ceased he said, "I know it is all confusion here, (they were just bringing in freshly wounded men,) but please kneel down, right here, and pray with me." I did so joyfully, and when I left the dying man he was hoping that he was accepted of God, in which hope I could not but join.

One day I met a man from near my own home. I talked with him a few minutes, and left him, not feeling that any deep impression was made. A few days later I held an evening meeting at the "Soldiers' Rest," and at its close, a man seized my hand and said, "Don't you remember the Worcester county boy with whom you talked at the hospital. I am now going to rejoin my regiment. I have thought much of what you said, and I go resolved to be a Christian man. Don't forget to pray for me. I will pray for myself till God shall hear. If I ever get back to old Worcester county again, I shall come and see you."

Thus I labored nearly two weeks at Washington.

Then came loud and repeated calls from White House, "Send us all the men you can;" and it was thought best that I should leave the hospital and go.

At White House I found the men lying by hundreds in their hospital tents, with nothing but a blanket, and often not even that, between them and the ground, dirty, often covered with vermin, with nothing but hard tack to eat, suffering intensely from recent and neglected wounds, dying at a fearful rate. We had need of far more stores than we could transport thither, and every day we witnessed much of suffering that we knew proper care, and medicine, and food, would soon alleviate. We gave the wounded men what we had. The luxuries of clean garments and soft crackers we were able to bestow, and that was enough to gain their heartfelt gratitude. The pail of tea which I carried around after dinner was most gratefully received, and many a one said as he took and drank his portion, "This makes me think of home." It was a far different field of labor from that at Fredericksburg or at Washington. There was more confusion and tumult, more destitution and suffering, more profanity, far less serious thought and religious interest.

I went around to the different tents one evening, and said, "Soldiers, shall we have family prayers?" "Yes, yes," they all answered, in every tent. "We always had them at home," said one. "We are certainly bad boys enough to need them," said another; and others answered, "That is too true." As I bade them good night, they said, at every tent, "Thank you!" "Come again!" "Come every night!"

One night, as I returned from my work, a man came running, and cried, "Chaplain, come quickly; there is a man dying." Is he a Christian, I asked, as I hastened to go. "No," was the reply, "he was a hard boy."

"Pray for me," said the dying man, as I entered his tent; and I prayed that God would help him, in his last moments, to believe in Christ. "You have been a great sinner," said I, as I rose from my knees. "O yes," he replied, "a great sinner." I told him of the dying thief; "O, it is sweet to think of that," said he. I spoke of Christ's invitation and promise to all, and the certainty that all who will trust in him shall be saved. "O what precious truth," he gasped, "how good to die with such assurance of mercy, if I will believe." Claspings his hands, he prayed for pardon, through Christ. Then he gave me the address of his mother, and said, "Write to her, and tell her that I die happily, trusting in Christ." Almost, as he spoke these words, he was gone.

I remained but a few days at White House. The excessive labor, the unwholesome air, and water, and diet, were too much for my health. I was brought away with the wounded, on a litter.

Such are some of the incidents of my work. Every day's experience with the wounded showed me the greatness of the work of the Christian Commission, and the importance of sustaining it. This, of all benevolent operations, the churches cannot afford to let languish. In sustaining it, they are not only accomplishing wonderful results of good for the kingdom of the Master, in the present, but are securing for themselves rich rewards in the future, when the soldiers of the camps and hospitals shall return to their homes. God grant that this great missionary enterprise may be appreciated and sustained as it deserves.

Very truly, yours,

DAVID WESTON.

READING MATTER.

Send no trash. Soldiers deserve the best. A library is a valuable hygienic appliance. For the able-bodied, good publications are mental and spiritual food. For convalescents, lively, interesting books, the monthlies, the pictorials, works of art, science, and literature, as well as those for moral and spiritual culture, such as you would put into the hands of a brother recovering.

STATIONERY IS MUCH NEEDED, paper, envelopes, and pencils.

HOW TO PACK.

Pack in boxes. Barrels are not as good. Secure well. Boxes should not be so large that two cannot conveniently lift them into a wagon. Pack eatables by themselves. Never pack perishable articles, such as oranges, lemons, bread, cakes, nor jars of jellies and jams, with other goods. Tin cans should be soldered; all other modes fail. Stone jars should be corked and firmly bound with oiled linen or leather over the cork, and packed closely in saw-dust or hay, in boxes never exceeding a dozen and a half in a box, and nailed strongly, to bear rough handling. Jellies in tumblers, covered with paper, and wines, cordials, &c., in bottles, with paper or other poor stoppers, are liable to spill out, and if packed with other things, sure to injure them.

HOW TO MARK.

Mark with paint or ink on the board,—cards rub off,—in plain letters and figures. On one corner, the number of the box according to the number sent by you in all, numbering your first box #1, your second #2, your third #3, and so on from the first sent to the last. On another corner, mark each box as from your Society, giving the name, and conspicuously also mark as follows:

“GEORGE H. STUART,
Chairman Christian Commission,
11 Bank Street, Philadelphia,”

or whatever other name, (see list on the cover,—next page) as may be most convenient.

To secure acknowledgments, and to save trouble, also send an invoice or list by mail, on paper (the common letter sheet size) written only on one side, specifying each box or barrel by number, and giving the contents of each by itself. Give your own name and post-office in full, with the name of your State. Place also another list or invoice of the same kind in the box under the lid, and if with this last you place also an envelope addressed to yourself, with a postage stamp upon it, you may sometimes,—not always,—have it returned to you through the mail, with the signature of the delegate, and the name of the hospital camp where he distributed it.

Write plainly. Above all, write your own name distinctly, and to save embarrassment, give your address in full, especially whether Miss or Mrs. or Rev.

Information and Instruction about Stores.

All good and suitable stores are welcomed, and all necessary freight and charges paid on them by the Commission, and are distributed by delegates of the Christian Commission personally.

WHAT TO SEND.

MONEY, by all means, if possible. To invest money in articles to send is unwise.

The Commission can purchase exactly what is wanted, at the very moment when needed most, and as a Commission at wholesale cheaper than others.

CLOTHING, ETC.

Cotton shirts,	Pillow-cases,
Cotton drawers,	Bed-ticks (single for filling with
Canton flannel shirts and draw-	straw,)
ers,	Pillows,
Surgical shirts and drawers (with	Pads, for fractured limbs,
tape strings to tie instead of	Ring pads, for wounds,
seams at the sides,)	Fans,
Large cotton drawers (to wear	Netting, to protect from flies,
in-doors as pants,)	Housewives, stored with needles,
Dressing gowns,	thread, buttons, pins, &c.
Slippers (if of cloth or carpet,	Handkerchiefs,
with stiff soles,)	Wash-rags,
Sheets,	Old linen.

BERRIES, FRUIT, VEGETABLES.

As this is the season for these articles in their freshness and abundance, remember their special and great value for the soldiers both fresh and preserved.

FOOD, ETC.

Oat meal,	Soda biscuit,	Onions, in barrels,
Farina,	Butter crackers,	Apples, in barrels,
Corn starch,	Boston crackers,	Cranberries,
Dried rusk,	Pickles,	Good butter, in small jars,
Jellies,	Jams,	Dried fruits.

In special cases, eggs, bread, cakes, &c., are needed, but not generally. They should never be sent unless specially called for.

FOR BEVERAGES.

Good black tea,	Chocolate,	Lemons,	Syrups.
All preparations of the Blackberry are of double value.			

STIMULANTS.

Good brandy,	Madeira wine,	Port wine,	Cordials.
Domestic wines are excellent in winter, apt to spoil in summer.			

COMMUNICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

For the UNITED STATES CHRISTIAN COMMISSION may be sent to any of the following places, as may be most convenient, addressed to the persons designated.

PHILADELPHIA.—Letters to Rev. W. E. Boardman, Rev. Lemuel Moss, or Rev. Bernice D. Ames, 11 Bank Street; money to Joseph Patterson, at the Western Bank; stores to George H. Stuart, 11 Bank Street.

NEW YORK.—Letters and supplies to Nathan Bishop, 30 Bible House; money to James M. Brown, 59 Wall Street.

BOSTON.—Letters to Charles Demond, 4 Court Street; money to Joseph Storey, 112 Tremont Street; stores to L. P. Roland, Tremont Temple.

PITTSBURG.—Letters to Robert C. Totten; money to Joseph Albree, 71 Wood Street; stores to W. P. Weyman, 79 Smithfield Street.

CINCINNATI.—Letters to Rev. J. F. Marlay; money to W. T. Perkins, 17 West Third Street; supplies to A. E. Chamberlain, Rooms Christian Commission, 51 Vine Street.

INDIANAPOLIS, IND.—Letters to C. N. Todd; money to James M. Ray; supplies to G. W. Clippinger.

CHICAGO.—Letters to B. F. Jacobs, P. O. Box 5801; money to John V. Farwell; supplies to Rooms Young Men's Christian Association, Methodist Church Block.

ST. LOUIS.—Letters to J. H. Parsons, Daily Union Office; money to Edward Ticknor; supplies to Isaac S. Smyth, Christian Commission Office, under Lindell Hotel.

DETROIT.—Communications and money to C. F. Clarke, and supplies to E. C. Walker.

BALTIMORE.—Letters to Rev. J. McJilton; money to Rev. Geo. P. Hays; stores to G. S. Griffiths, 77 West Baltimore Street.

BUFFALO, N. Y.—Communications to Rev. S. Hunt; money to F. Gridley; supplies to John D. Hill, M. D.

TROY, N. Y.—Letters and money to F. P. Allen; supplies to J. H. Willard.

HARRISBURG, PA.—Communications, money and supplies to Rev. T. H. Robinson.

ROCHESTER, N. Y.—Communications, money and supplies to Oliver D. Grosvenor.

WASHINGTON, D. C.—Communications, money and supplies to William Bantyne, 498 Seventh Street, or Rev. J. J. Abbott, cor. 10th and H Streets.

LOUISVILLE, KY.—Communications, money and supplies to J. Edward Hardy, care of J. G. Dodge & Co., 325 Main Street.

PEORIA, ILL.—Money to Theo. Higbee; communications and supplies to William Reynolds.

FREDERICK, MD.—Communications, money and supplies to Gideon Bantz.

HAGERSTOWN, MD.—Communications, money and supplies to Rev. Mr. Evans.

PORTLAND, ME.—Communications and supplies to Thomas R. Hayes; money to C. Sturdivant.

BANGOR, ME.—Communications, money and supplies to T. G. Stickney.

PROVIDENCE, R. I.—Money to John W. Vernon; communications and supplies to Dea. W. J. King.

BROOKLYN, N. Y.—Communications to Rev. J. B. Waterbury, D. D.; supplies to W. S. Griffiths, and money to Samuel B. Caldwell.

ALBANY, N. Y.—Supplies to Thos. W. Olcott; letters to Levi Dedrick; money to Wm. McElroy.

LAMBERTVILLE, N. J.—Supplies and money to J. A. Anderson; letters to C. Pierson.

WHEELING, W. V.—Communications, money and supplies to R. Crangle.

CLEVELAND, O.—Letters to Rev. L. F. Mellen; money to S. H. Mather; supplies to Stillman Witt.

ST. PAUL'S, MINN.—Letters to H. M. Knox; money to D. D. Merrill; supplies to D. W. Ingersoll.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.—Letters to Rev. E. Thomas, 711 Mission Street; money to P. Sather, (Sather & Co.) supplies to J. B. Roberts.

SACRAMENTO, CAL.—Letters to Rev. J. S. McDonald; money to Dr. R. H. McDonald; supplies to Rev. N. R. Peck.

STOCKTON, CAL.—Communications and money to Rev. R. Happersett, D. D.



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